

NSC BRIEFING

23 March 1960

BACKGROUND

IRAQ

I. [redacted] increase in internal tensions as Iraqi Communists bear brunt of Qasim's political maneuvering.

A. Recent security precautions noted include increased military patrolling in Baghdad, step-up in army training activities,

[redacted]

B. Military Governor-General Abdi issued order on 23 March banning carrying of weapons, except shotguns, within all major Iraqi towns.

[redacted]

D. Major clash between Communists and nationalists reported by Basra consulate as occurring there on 19 March. Fifteen injured and 50 to 75 arrested.

[redacted]

III. Major disturbances between Communist and non-Communist elements have become increasingly likely.

A. Moves by government to limit Communist influence have emboldened anti-Communists and seem to have made Communist leaders feel they must stage some demonstration of strength.

State Department review completed

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- B. Communist-controlled newspapers are continuing to snipe at regime and Communist leaders were apparently behind rash of minor strikes last week.
- IV. Qasim appears to be falling back on the army as his chief political support and key army officers, mostly anti-Communist, will probably play a vital role in future developments.

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